CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 8 August 1991, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Stephen J. Ledogar (United States of America)

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The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 601st plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

At the outset, I would like to bid farewell, on behalf of the Conference and myself, to two distinguished friends and colleagues who are today attending the plenary for the last time before they assume new functions assigned to them by their Governments. I take particular pleasure in doing so, as they are both being appointed to serve in different capacities in my own country. During his brief but able tenure as representative of Brazil to this Conference, Ambassador Ricupero has confirmed once more his reputation in Geneva as a skilful and competent diplomat. He has now been entrusted with the responsibility of representing his country before my own Government in Washington. Relations between Brazil and the United States have always been excellent, and I cannot think of a more appropriate interlocutor to further strengthen those relations. Ambassador Elaraby of Egypt is a very experienced diplomat in the field of disarmament, having also served with distinction in the predecessor of this body, the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament. A gifted professional, during his four years with this Conference everyone has come to value his talent for persuasion and his knowledge of the complexities of multilateral diplomacy. This will, I am sure, serve him well in his new functions. Although he will not be dealing with bilateral relations, while in New York he will be a welcome and appreciated guest of the United States. On behalf of all of us I wish our two colleagues every success in their new postings.

The representative of Brazil, Ambassador Ricupero, has asked to say a few words at this point and, if there is no objection from the listed speakers, I would give him the floor at this time. Ambassador, you have the floor.

Mr. RICUPERO (Brazil): Mr. President, with your permission and the permission of the other speakers, I would like to have the privilege of taking the floor right away because unfortunately I have to leave shortly, so to my great regret I cannot stay until the end of the proceedings. I was deeply moved by your words, Mr. President, and it gives me particular satisfaction to hear them from you, the representative of the United States of America, a country where in a few weeks I will have the honour of representing my own country, Brazil, going back to the post where I served about 15 or 18 years ago. I would also like to express my feelings of deep gratitude to yourself and to all our colleagues for the numerous signs of friendship, of sympathy, of cooperation, extended to me during my work here in the Conference. I have greatly benefited from your wisdom, from your experience, and I am sorry to leave the Conference at this moment, at this turning-point in international affairs when things are moving everywhere, where I am sure that the Conference on Disarmament will have its share of historical progress - I am sure you will make good use of the opportunity that is opening before us. I would like once again to thank you all, to wish you all well in your endeavours.

The PRESIDENT: I have on my list of speakers today, the representatives of Poland, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Egypt, Argentina, Romania and Morocco. I now give the floor to the representative of Poland, Mr. Przygodzki.

Mr. PRZYGODZKI (Poland): My delegation has already had a chance to congratulate you, Mr. President, on the assumption of your responsible duties. Today, as the term of your presidency is going to be completed soon, I should like to express our deep appreciation for the exemplary way you have guided the deliberations of this body and for your personal input to the work of the Conference.

I wish to join you, Mr. President, in saying words of farewell to the distinguished Ambassador of Brazil and to the distinguished Ambassador of Egypt. The Polish delegation highly appreciated the cooperation with them and the important contribution they made to the work of this Conference. We wish them well in their future careers and personal lives.

I wish to express the deep satisfaction of my Government with the signing last week by President George Bush and President Mikhail Gorbachev of the strategic arms reduction Treaty. I should like to convey to you, Mr. President, as the representative of the United States, as well as to the representative of the USSR, our warmest congratulations on this historic event. We highly appreciate the efforts which have been made both by your country, Mr. President, and by the Soviet Union in overcoming all the difficulties and obstacles on the road to concluding the START Treaty. This is indeed good news for the whole of mankind, and also for this body, which has the question of the cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament high on its agenda. The START Treaty, being the first commitment of both States to cut significantly the arsenals of long-range nuclear weapons, including, in particular, the most destabilizing systems of such weapons, will undoubtedly stand as a milestone on the way towards a more secure world. I do hope that in a near future we negotiators in Geneva will be able to make our own contribution to disarmament efforts by successfully completing negotiations on the chemical weapons convention.

In our last statement at the Conference on Disarmament my delegation promised to present a report on a trial inspection on request conducted at some Soviet military facilities on Polish territory. Poland initiated preparations for such an inspection at the beginning of this year. However, at that time our initiative did not materialize. Today I would like to introduce a joint report on behalf of the Republic of Poland and the USSR on the trial inspection on request conducted by Poland at two Soviet military facilities located on the territory of my country on 17 and 18 April 1991. The detailed report on the conduct of this inspection and its results is tabled as document CD/1093 (working paper CD/CW/WP.354).

The principal aims of this inspection were, first, to confirm, in so far as Poland's territory is concerned, the USSR declaration on non-possession of chemical weapons outside its territory; and second, to test relevant procedures of the "rolling text" in practice and to train inspectors in carrying out such inspections. In view of the twofold character of this inspection certain procedural elements were properly adjusted without

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prejudice to relevant provisions under the convention. At the same time activities of inspectors were carried out pursuant to a bilateral protocol agreed between Poland and the USSR based on the preceding version of the "rolling text" (CD/1033).

The facilities inspected during this inspection on request were selected by the Polish side. The first was a central artillery depot of the Soviet troops, the second a central chemical depot, both located on the territory of Poland. The different nature of each of these facilities required different approaches to the conduct of the inspection. In the latter case the inspection team inspected the entire depot, while at the first facility it was possible to limit the inspection to just a part of it. In both cases conclusions were identical: no chemical weapons or their traces were discovered.

I would like to note with appreciation the full cooperation of the Soviet authorities and the management of the inspected facilities at all stages of the inspection. The inspection team had full access to all places selected by it, as well as to all documentation. This played an important role as a confidence-building measure at a time when relations between Poland and the USSR are being developed on a qualitatively new basis.

The experience gained during the exercise confirmed that inspection on request constitutes an indispensable element of the effective verification of compliance with the convention. The extent of cooperation by the inspected State with the inspection team will play a great role in dispelling concern about treaty compliance and terminating an inspection at an earlier stage when sufficient evidence is obtained that doubts or suspicion giving rise to the request were unwarranted. A request for inspection should, to the extent possible, clearly identify the nature of suspicion. This would considerably facilitate the task of the technical secretariat to select inspectors with appropriate qualifications and suitable equipment to fulfil the aims of the inspection.

In view of the importance of inspections on request in the verification system of the future chemical weapons convention, my delegation welcomes all efforts to find a final solution to this very important issue in our negotiations. Working paper CD/CW/WP.352 constitutes, in our view, a good basis for further work on article IX. We do believe that an agreement on the final shape of inspection on request will enable us to make progress on all other outstanding issues, thus contributing to the attainment of our common goal - completing negotiations on the chemical weapons convention by 1992. My delegation is ready to contribute its share in this endeavour.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Poland for his statement and for the joint report he introduced, and I also thank him for the kind words addressed to the Chair and to the arms control and disarmament efforts of my Government. I now give the floor to the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Mr. Iossifov.

Mr. IOSSIFOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (translated from Russian): On behalf of the Soviet delegation I too wish to express our appreciation and gratitude to the distinguished Ambassadors of Brazil and Egypt for their contribution to the work of the Conference on Disarmament and for their cooperation with the Soviet delegation. We wish them success in their future endeavours.

Today the Soviet delegation jointly with the delegation of the Republic of Poland is introducing for consideration by the participants in the negotiations a document entitled "Joint report on a trial inspection on request", which is being circulated as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament numbered CD/1093 and dated 6 August 1991, and at the same time as a working paper of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons under number CD/CW/WP.354. In terms of timing the introduction of this document has coincided with the stepping up of the discussion on inspections on request in the negotiations, and we hope that the submitted material will facilitate the search for a mutually acceptable solution to this problem.

As the participants in the negotiations are aware, the Soviet Union has officially declared that it has no chemical weapons on the territory of other States (CD/CW/WP.264). The Republic of Poland, which has also submitted data related to chemical weapons to the Conference on Disarmament, has declared, inter alia, that it does not possess chemical weapons (CD/985). With a view to strengthening mutual understanding and trust between the two sides, the Soviet Union and Poland agreed to carry out a trial inspection on request. The trial inspection had the following aims: to confirm, in so far as Poland's territory is concerned, the USSR declaration on non-possession of chemical weapons outside its territory; to test in practice the relevant procedures of the protocol on inspection procedures contained in the draft convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons to be used in checking the suspected storage of chemical weapons; to determine the necessary scope of activities which should be carried out by the inspection team during an inspection on request at military facilities; and lastly to train inspectors in carrying out such inspections.

The trial inspection was carried out during the period from 17 to 18 April 1991 at two Soviet military facilities located on Polish territory. The facilities to be inspected were selected by the Polish side. The inspection was carried out at the central artillery depot, where different types of artillery munitions are stored, and at the central chemical depot, where gear for protection against weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons, are stored. On the basis of the results of the inspection it was concluded that no chemical weapons or traces of such weapons are present at the inspected facilities. Overall the experiment demonstrated that it is important and essential to include a concept of inspections on request in the verification mechanism under the future convention as a basic element for ensuring compliance with the provisions of the convention and dispelling possible concerns on the part of the future States parties with regard to such compliance.

(Mr. Iossifov, USSR)

Allow me now to dwell in a little more detail on certain aspects of the trial inspection which are of direct relevance to the issues in the context of inspections on request currently under discussion in the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons. First, it should be noted, in our view, that the inspection team was granted access to any place within the inspected facilities. During the inspection there were no cases of refusal to grant any requests for access. Another aspect is related to the time elapsing between the submission of the request for the inspection and the granting of access to the facilities indicated in the request. The request was submitted 16 hours prior to the arrival of the inspection team at the point of entry. Access to the first facility was provided within two hours after arrival at the point of entry. The notification of the second facility to be inspected was presented 15 hours prior to the arrival of the inspection team at the facility. During the inspection agreed equipment was used.

Naturally, the results of this inspection on request do not claim to be regarded as universal, but we hope that their joint presentation by the Soviet and Polish delegations will help the participants in the negotiations to finalize their approach to this form of verification.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics for his statement, which also spoke of the joint report addressed by the representative of Poland. I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt, Ambassador Elaraby.

Mr. ELARABY (Egypt): It is a source of great pleasure for me to take the floor under the presidency of Ambassador Stephen Ledogar, the distinguished representative of the United States. Your wide and highly recognized diplomatic experience, Mr. President, is well known to all the members of the Conference on Disarmament. Your contributions in the field of disarmament, both bilateral and multilateral, are well recognized. I am confident that under your very able leadership meaningful progress in our work will be attained. Mr. President, I was personally touched by the gracious sentiments you expressed regarding my departure from Geneva and the assumption of my new post in New York, and I am grateful for that.

I shall at the outset address the chemical weapons convention. I begin by paying tribute to the efforts of Ambassador Serguei Batsanov of the Soviet Union, the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, and the three chairmen of the working groups entrusted with the preparation of the convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons, as well as the Friends of the Chair. My delegation's gratitude also goes to Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail and his able assistants for their meticulous work.

The spectre of the production and use of chemical weapons has caused universal concern. There is no doubt that a comprehensive treaty banning chemical weapons is the appropriate framework to deal with the question. The work of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons established by the Conference on Disarmament is closely followed now by the international community as a whole. The Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons is at present

(Mr. Elaraby, Egypt)

undertaking consultations on an extensive programme of work for the remainder of 1991 and the beginning of 1992. Whatever the outcome of his consultations, I wish to state that my delegation is prepared to work on a full-scale schedule should the Conference on Disarmament so decide.

Last year the President of the United States made an important and timely initiative on chemical weapons. My delegation is grateful that it took two stumbling-blocks out of our way. But what is more significant is that it reaffirmed the commitment on the highest level in the United States to the conclusion of a convention on the comprehensive prohibition of chemical weapons, and that there is no place on board for non-proliferation; a position that Egypt has always maintained.

Egypt is of the view that universal adherence to the chemical weapons convention is imperative. To attain univeral adherence all the Members of the United Nations should be involved, as appropriate, in the actual preparation of the convention. An open-ended preparatory commission to precede or follow a ministerial conference, or, as the Foreign Minister of Japan suggested when he addressed us on 6 June 1991, that "we should consider convening a meeting in Geneva at the level of high officials", could positively contribute towards the universality that we aspire to attain and could serve as a useful tool in our quest to encourage universal adherence. For this reason we appreciate the constructive step that the Conference on Disarmament took when it considered sending letters to States which are neither members of nor observers at our Conference, bringing to their attention the most recent report of the Ad Hoc Committee so that they could benefit from following the work in this important phase. By doing this, I believe that we would achieve two objectives. The first is to have more participation in our work by observers in the Conference, and the second is to embark on the open-ended preparatory phase we have been considering for a long time now.

In this connection, I would like to refer to the proposal to convene a ministerial meeting as one method of finalizing our work and ensuring universality. Since the proposed ministerial meeting is directly related to the package approach, the decision to convene it is anchored on what we will be able to accomplish in elaborating the package. The more concise the package is, the more easy it becomes to invite the ministers to accelerate the conclusion of the CW convention. On the other hand, if the package is not based on a comprehensive approach the preparation of the ministerial meeting becomes insufficient, and would have negative effects because we will only be left with incoherent positions at the highest level of decision-making, which could backfire.

It is good news that the members of the Conference have agreed to add a reference to the prohibition of use to the mandate. This, however, just brings the wording of the mandate into line with the unambiguous absolute prohibition against the use of chemical weapons that already exists in article I of the draft convention. Our aim is to conclude a convention which will be universally adhered to. But universal adherence in itself is subject

(Mr. Elaraby, Egypt)

to the question of undiminished security - an issue which imposes itself in almost every aspect and provision of our draft convention. A legal question which is very relevant to the issue of undiminished security is the relation of the chemical weapons convention to other relevant international agreements. This provision is the cover under which unilaterally declared "rights" under the 1925 Geneva Protocol are to be transferred to and thereby eternalized in the chemical weapons convention. Some maintain the position that retaliatory use of chemical weapons in conformity with the reservations attached to the 1925 Protocol must remain permissible as long as chemical weapons exist. Any such attempts aiming at creating a situation of legal uncertainty about the scope of the prohibition and the implementation of the convention should be resisted, for it would undermine the integrity of the whole edifice of the convention. The convention should be the sole international contractual legal instrument that governs chemical weapons; otherwise we will be creating a dual legal regime. Furthermore, the legal uncertainty concerning the scope of the prohibition and the implementation of the convention will continue to plague the international community. The comprehensive undertaking not to use chemical weapons, which is already provided for in article I, paragraph 3 of the draft convention, is incompatible with any claim that a reservation to the 1925 Protocol can be carried through in the future. The chemical weapons convention should, therefore, provide that all States with retaliatory rights under the 1925 Protocol should renounce their reservations at the time they sign the convention.

Another important issue that falls directly under the broad concept of undiminished security is that of sanctions. In the absence of effective international control, comprising credible assurances as well as viable monitoring arrangements, the threat to both national and international security persists. This is why the international community should not limit itself to negative assurances in the manner followed with respect to the non-proliferation Treaty. What is needed is positive and credible assurances which would be applied through a mechanism elaborated by the convention and in conformity with the rules of international law. Sanctions, in my view, are guarantees to ensure ultimate compliance. In order to sustain the credibility of these sanctions, they will have to be monitored by the executive council acting under the appropriate supervision of the Security Council. In some cases non-compliance with the convention may constitute a threat to international peace and security. This is why I suggest that a clear relation be established between the functions and competence of the executive council and the Charter-prescribed responsibilities of the Security Council. The executive council should consider the questions of non-compliance and convey its conclusions and recommendations to the Security Council. My delegation welcomes the decision taken by the Ad Hoc Committee to incorporate a new article under the title "Measures to redress a situation and ensure compliance, including sanctions". My delegation has been advocating the inclusion of such an article since 1989. We do, however, realize that further work on this article and related provisions in other parts of the draft convention is still required.

(Mr. Elaraby, Egypt)

Another pending issue is that of settlement of disputes. There is no provision in the "rolling text" at present on this subject. Certain references, however, exist, though scattered among some articles which specify one method, namely negotiations. What happens, for example, if a solution is not reached through negotiation? All such measures and methods of dispute settlement should be incorporated in the text. Provisions dealing with settlement of disputes should be assembled under a single article, and it should be expected that certain disputes may arise out of the application or the interpretation of the convention. We must, therefore, provide adequate means for the resolution of such disputes. It is reassuring that the Ad Hoc Committee has embarked on the consideration of this subject. A new and comprehensive article on this subject in the "rolling text" will no doubt be a stimulus for further work.

The chemical weapons convention is a functional agreement. Thus the organizational aspects of the convention acquire great relevance. The executive council will be the principal political organ of the organization to be established for the purpose of implementing the convention. The composition of the executive council and its decision-making mechanism should be determined on the basis of the functional requirements - that is to say rapidity in convening meetings and the ability to take timely decisions. A flexible non-discriminatory appointment regime should be adopted to safeguard the right of every State to serve on the council without any special rights or discrimination. The functions of the executive council are just as important. The council should be expected to supervise all the activities emanating from the convention. It should consider the questions of non-compliance and convey its conclusions and recommendations to the Security Council, as I have already stated.

I now turn to the question of verification. The credibility of the verification regime to be established by the convention will be one of the major factors governing its life course. A watertight verification regime is imperative in order to allow the convention to pursue its objectives. The draft convention envisages a number of verification measures. What is revolutionary about this convention is the idea that States parties to the convention are asked to accept, beforehand, the fact that the organization, through its appropriate organs, could at any time inspect any site on their respective territories. This innovation is a bold challenge to the concept of sovereignty. If such provisions are to be enshrined in the chemical weapons convention, as we all hope, they will open a new phase in international relations built on total transparency in all disarmament agreements.

The Ad Hoc Committee has been active on the issue of challenge inspections during the past few weeks. There are several proposals on this question, the most recent of which is the proposal presented by four States and contained in document CD/CW/WP.352. The purpose of any provision on challenge inspection should be to clarify and resolve questions of compliance with the convention. Requests for inspections must only be within the scope of the convention, which is the total prohibition of chemical weapons.

(Mr. Elaraby, Egypt)

The executive council should be informed of any request immediately, and should be able to convene right away to follow the course of the investigation so that timely decisions may be taken in order to facilitate the task of the inspectors and to control the situation. Although such inspections should be effective and timely, they should be executed in the least intrusive manner. The challenged State should have the right to protect its national security and industrial secrets. However, in order to ensure compliance by the challenged State, the chemical weapons convention should provide clear-cut procedures in order to strike a balance between these legitimate rights of States and the success of this regime. The report of the inspection operation has to be passed to the parties as well as to the executive council. This report should contain a statement of the factual findings of the inspectors, as well as a conclusion which would help the executive council in deciding whether the challenged party was in compliance with the convention or violating it. Furthermore, the executive council should be able to convene immediately to consider ways and means to remedy the situation and to ensure compliance. This would involve bringing the matter to the attention of the Security Council. A provision to ensure that the right to request challenge inspections will not be abused also has to be included in the text.

The convention should provide a protective umbrella for the States parties, in the form of assistance provided by the other States parties to limit the effect of the use or threat of use of chemical weapons. This system should cover a whole range of measures from prevention to treatment. In addition to the question of automaticity required in implementing this provision, the convention must trigger a mechanism in a well-defined time-frame. It is a major achievement that the Ad Hoc Committee was able to move article X from appendix II to appendix I. However, transferring it to appendix I does not mean that article X cannot be improved. The work undertaken in Working Group A aims at attaining such improvement.

Another major step that the Ad Hoc Committee was able to achieve during the inter-sessional period was that of taking article XI off the shelf, where it has been for several years, and putting it in its proper place in appendix I. Article XI is a key provision for universal adherence to the convention. To a large extent, adherence to it will depend, inter alia, on the nature and scope of the provisions that will provide for international cooperation to develop the peaceful uses of chemical industries; a convention that does not, however, impede peaceful chemical activities. I wish to emphasize the interest of all States in ensuring that the economic and technological development of their chemical industry are not hampered. In this context, a technical assistance programme to help parties in organizing a system for monitoring their chemical industry should be devised. It is also imperative that the flow of chemicals, instruments and data be maintained. These concepts should be scrutinized so as to clearly reflect the rights and obligations within the context of a well-justified balance.

The Ad Hoc Committee is divided on the question of environment. We believe it is important to introduce provisions on environment in relation with the destruction of CW and any other activity prohibited by the convention.

(Mr. Elaraby, Egypt)

I now wish to address the issue of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. Egypt has consistently striven to spare this region fraught with tension from the scourge of a possible recourse to any type of weapon of mass destruction. The accumulation of such weapons in the Middle East creates a destabilizing environment that endangers international peace and security.

Egypt has, since 1974, annually presented to the United Nations General Assembly a resolution calling for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Since 1980 that resolution has been adopted by the General Assembly by consensus. Last year a group of experts appointed by the Secretary-General submitted a study. It is relevant to recall the conclusion contained in paragraph 110 of that study that "an effective zone would be a great improvement over the present situation. The problem is how to create the conditions in which a zone becomes a realistic development."

On 8 April 1990, President Hosni Mubarak proposed the establishment of a "zone free from weapons of mass destruction" in the Middle East. The three components of President Mubarak's proposal are the following: First, that all weapons of mass destruction without exception should be prohibited in the Middle East, nuclear, chemical or biological; second, that all States of the region without exception make an equal and reciprocal commitment in this regard; third, that verification measures and modalities be established to ascertain full compliance by all States in the region with the full scope of that prohibition without exception.

This initiative provides the appropriate framework for engaging States in the region in a process that would ultimately facilitate the establishment of such a zone in the Middle East, and ensure regional collective accession through the encouragement of all States in the region to adhere to the international legal instruments that comprise the juridical regimes regulating weapons of mass destruction. These legal instruments are the non-proliferation Treaty, the biological weapons Convention of 1972 and the chemical weapons convention which is under preparation now at the CD. The successful employment of confidence-building measures in the Middle East will undoubtedly be augmented through the adherence of all parties in the region to these three important legal instruments.

Proposals on chemical and biological weapons relating to the region should be considered by these States within this framework. Egypt would like to reaffirm that disarmament measures relating to the different weapons of mass destruction cannot be taken in isolation, and that all the States of the region should be legally bound by the same obligations without any exception.

At this juncture, I am pleased to invite the attention of the CD to a letter dated 21 July 1991 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, concerning the recent proposals on arms limitation and disarmament in the Middle East. This letter was reproduced on 30 July 1991 as an official document of the General Assembly (A/46/329) and the Security Council (S/22855). May I request the circulation of this document as an official document of the CD?

(Mr. Elaraby, Egypt)

With your permission, Mr. President, I would like to conclude on a personal note. I had the honour to serve in the Egyptian delegation to the CCD in the mid-1970s, as you rightly pointed out. I was away from Geneva for 11 years. When I came back, four years ago, a glance at the Conference on Disarmament files and proceedings was sufficient to reveal that no progress whatsoever had been achieved in a whole decade. No doubt, all the members of the CD realized this fact, and there was an atmosphere of general disappointment. I am happy to state that today, when I am in the process of relinquishing my post in Geneva, I leave with feelings of hope and great expectations for the work of the Conference on Disarmament and for the efforts exerted to achieve disarmament in general. Several important developments have transformed our contemporary world in recent years. Suffice it to mention the general relaxation between the super-Powers and the oft referred-to attempts to revise the Charter of the United Nations and to make a genuine attempt to resuscitate its provisions relating to the maintenance of international peace and security. Moreover, several important agreements in the nuclear field have been concluded, and when it comes to the chemical weapons convention, there is a general agreement that the light at the end of the tunnel is now glowing brighter. Here I must confess that I envy you, distinguished members of the Conference on Disarmament, for you will soon witness the fruition of these long and arduous negotiations. I take leave of you, Mr. President, and look forward to seeing all of you next October in New York and to cooperating once more with you, in our joint endeavours to create a better world for future generations.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my old friends Ambassador Miljan Komatina, Secretary-General of the CD and Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and Ambassador Vicente Berasategui, Deputy Secretary-General of the CD. Their advice and guidance has always been highly appreciated.

(continued in Arabic)

In conclusion, I would like to pay tribute to the interpreters, especially those in the Arabic booth, and to thank them particularly for their efforts.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Egypt for his statement and for the kind words addressed to me. The letter dated 21 July 1991 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations to which you referred, Ambassador, will be circulated as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament. I now give the floor to the representative of Argentina, Ambassador García Moritán.

Mr. GARCIA MORITAN (Argentina) (translated from Spanish): As you end your term of office as President, I would like to express the special appreciation of my delegation for the way in which you have conducted our work during this unique phase that the negotiating body is currently passing through. Your distinguished personal qualities and your professionalism have earned the respect of my delegation.

(Mr. García Moritán, Argentina)

On behalf of the Conference on Disarmament you have bidden farewell to two distinguished colleagues who have made a significant contribution to this Conference and to the multilateral effort being made in security and international cooperation. I believe that all of us, and in particular the Argentine delegation, will greatly miss the personal and professional qualities of the distinguished Ambassadors of Brazil, Rubens Ricupero, and Egypt, Nabil Elaraby. Just a few days ago another friend, the distinguished Ambassador Chadha of India, left us. The Conference will certainly not be the same without them.

As the formal session for 1991 draws to a close, the negotiations in the chemical weapons Committee are becoming more concrete in keeping with the time-frames and objectives we have set, in particular as the change in the mandate of the Ad Hoc Committee, following the new impetus given to the negotiations as a result of President Bush's initiative, stipulated that next year we should conclude our already excessively prolonged work. Deadlines are approaching, and inevitably we have to tackle the most difficult questions, those which in the final analysis reflect our interest in the instrument designed to ban chemical weapons for ever. Now that the problem of the destruction of existing stockpiles has been resolved, and the issue of a ban on use has been directly and unequivocally included in the text of the convention, some questions of major importance still remain to be solved. This morning I will refer to some of them.

Allow me briefly to recall that in a previous statement, my delegation had occasion to express one or two ideas concerning the verification system for the chemical industry under article VI. At that time we tried to draw attention to the need for negotiating efforts to be directed towards a simpler formulation of the verification mechanism which at the same time would provide a credible guarantee that the provisions of the convention with respect to non-military activities in the chemical field would be duly complied with. We believe that the exercise that has been going on both in Group B as well as in the consultations led by France as a Friend of the Chair have to a large extent followed this thrust. But we think that further efforts could certainly be made to simplify the verification system under article VI, which should be focused on actual production of chemicals and production capacity, and not on the material flow or balance of chemicals, which, as much experience - including not a few national trial inspections - has shown, is not sufficiently accurate to support the conclusion that the convention is not being breached through the transfer of chemicals.

This brief initial digression serves to remind you of what, in the view of my delegation, should be the dominant guiding principle regarding inspections under article VI. On this same issue of verification of the chemical industry I think it is important to point out that the recent meeting at which representatives of the world chemical industry exchanged views with the members of the Committee confirmed the impression shared by many delegations involved in the negotiations that the verification system must be open and simple and must take account in a very special way of the principle

(Mr. García Moritán, Argentina)

that the normal operations of the chemical industry must not be affected. In view of a recurrent tendency that has been observed in the negotiations in the Committee to insist on complex and indeed costly formulations, I will not hesitate to repeat today that this article deals with activities not prohibited by the convention, in other words, perfectly legitimate activities.

Advocates of these sophisticated verification systems have argued that the risk that certain facilities could pose for the convention should not be side-stepped. Risk, as everyone knows, is a category that pertains to the realm of perception. There is nothing less uniform in the field of disarmament than the security perceptions of the negotiating States. Hence what some might consider of paramount importance as a risk assessment parameter - production capacity, multi-purpose capability of a facility - could be perceived by others as less important than, for instance, its location. In other words, the fact that a plant might be located in an isolated place or might possess power sources indicating a high level of activity or one that would be difficult to justify under normal circumstances. Above all there is the political assessment of those involved, both that of the party assessing the risk and that of the potential transgressor. I sincerely believe that at this stage of our negotiations any risk assessment exercise which aspired to unanimity would be doomed to failure. This is why, as far as the Argentine Republic is concerned, an appropriate verification regime within the framework of article VI must be open, but at the same time realistic and circumscribed by parameters which are attainable and manageable both from the political and from the financial point of view.

The chemical weapons convention, as has been repeatedly stated, is a security treaty. This is its logical nerve-centre and the indisputable focal point of its content must be the provisions designed to secure the elimination and prevent the reappearance of chemical weapons. Therefore, for Argentina the chemical weapons convention must be equipped with a verification system which is sound and coherent from the viewpoint of security, and able to play effectively the deterrent role that any verification mechanism must play in order to discourage, or attach a very high political cost to, any breach of its provisions. That is why in our opinion the verification system under article IX is par excellence the most important element within the treaty's verification system if the treaty is to become a really successful agreement with universal adherence. I would therefore like to raise one or two ideas relating to the negotiations on article IX, and in particular challenge inspections, which we are concentrating on at the moment. Our thinking draws on consideration at the national level of what would be the implications and the scope of the system of challenge inspections, measured against the objectives of the convention and the legitimate security concerns that all the future States parties have to different degrees in this process.

At the same time, in voicing these ideas we have borne in mind the experience gained thanks to the positive and timely initiative of the delegation of Germany that enabled us to participate in the multilateral trial challenge inspection exercise held in an air base in the Frankfurt-Cologne

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area between 22 and 24 May this year. This was a very positive experience, and in that context our gratitude and appreciation go to the German authorities, through Ambassador von Wagner and his delegation, for the excellent arrangements and the highly professional way in which they conducted this complex joint exercise.

In our view, the inspection, details of which will undoubtedly be presented with greater authority by the organizing delegation, succeeded in demonstrating that a challenge inspection is a highly intrusive exercise, but that it can nevertheless be made compatible with the necessary confidentiality that must protect certain military facilities or others with a high commercial or scientific value. The concept of managed access, duly developed on an ad hoc basis - that is, taking into account the characteristics of the site to be inspected - should allow physical access by the organization's inspectors to any site located in a State party whenever a properly justified request is made for challenge inspection.

The exercise at Pferdersfeld made it clear that there are areas - the role of observers, the relationship between the inspection team and the receiving State, the closure (securing) of the site, the availability of reliable means of communication for the inspection team, the need to draw up a fully agreed glossary of important terms for the convention in the five official languages of the United Nations, all issues on which considerable work still has to be done with a view to improvement. The conclusion, however, is encouraging in indicating that it is possible to aim for a strong system of challenge inspections without unduly affecting the security of the receiving State.

Very recently the Ad Hoc Committee received with keen interest a new proposal on challenge inspections put forward by your delegation, Mr. President, along with the delegations of Australia, Japan and the United Kingdom. It joins the existing proposals and will undoubtedly constitute a major contribution to our deliberations. We believe that a number of the elements we identified when referring to the inspection carried out in Germany in May have been taken into account by the authors of this initiative, and we welcome this fact as an encouraging element. At the same time, we think it useful to point out a few basic points that the final blueprint of verification under the convention should in our view include in its final form.

First of all, any system of challenge inspections agreed upon should guarantee the inspection team rapid, not to say immediate, access to the agreed site. Otherwise the challenge would turn into a phased warning, which we do not think would be in anyone's interest, not to mention the fact that any delay, be it at the moment of initiation or later on, would in our view contradict the very principle and the definition of challenge inspections. Secondly, access for the inspectors should be understood primarily as physical access, with the appropriate limitations arising out of the concept of managed access, carried out on an ad hoc basis in the light of the necessarily differing importance of the requested site from the viewpoint of practical

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factors (geographical, access, and so on), as well as its significance from the point of view of the various aspects of confidentiality, whether scientific, commercial or military. The use of alternative forms and/or concepts of access should be elaborated in detail in order to avoid any counter-productive effect. We hope that the current negotiations will lead to progress on this point.

Without seeking to carry the analogy with the activities carried out by the special United Nations commission appointed to monitor compliance with Security Council resolution 687 further than prudence dictates in these cases, we believe that there are important lessons which must be drawn from this continuing exercise, in particular with regard to physical access for inspectors and securing of inspected sites. We believe that if all these considerations are taken into account, they will help to lead to agreement on a challenge inspection system which, in our opinion is worthy of the name.

As our negotiations proceed in various forums, it is common and refreshing to observe that when, perhaps on account of the fatigue and excessive emphasis on details that inevitably go hand in hand with any negotiating process as intense as ours, we get unnecessarily side-tracked in the negotiations, a delegation reminds us of the direction and aim of the exercise. Consequently, we must remember that we are actually negotiating a security agreement, an agreement that has clear and precise objectives and does not try to impose restrictions on the chemical industry, an agreement that in fact seeks to offer sufficient guarantees so that in signing it, States will gain an additional degree of security. This morning, while considering the verification system under article IX, my delegation, without seeking to correct anyone's course, would merely like to remind the Conference of the nature of our negotiations. I am sure that we shall not forget this basic premise in the forthcoming months, which will undoubtedly be the final months.

By way of conclusion, allow me to indicate that as representative of a State that ratified the Geneva Protocol of 1925 without any reservations, we think that the time has come - the time can no longer be delayed - for those who ratified it with reservations to withdraw them so as to begin the 1992 session, during which the convention will be concluded, with a renewed spirit and commitment.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Argentina for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Romania, Ambassador Neagu.

Mr. NEAGU (Romania) (translated from French): Two weeks ago, in the statement which I had the honour to deliver in this important forum, the Romanian delegation was pleased to note the imminent signature of the Treaty on the reduction of strategic armaments. Now, my delegation would like to join all the other delegations in praising the conclusion of this document by the Presidents of the United States and the USSR, George Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev. For the record, I would also like to state that Romania considers this to be one of the great st achievements on the road to disarmament.

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The signature of the START Treaty puts an end to a period of common endeavours and mutual concessions, the only way of solving difficult problems of such dimensions and significance as those settled in this Treaty. By virtue of its content and final objective, the new Soviet-American Treaty can be regarded as an international instrument of truly historic significance. It gives expression to the present situation of the relationship between the two great nuclear Powers and international relations in general, as a result of profound changes that have occurred in Europe and all over the world.

The particular importance of the START Treaty consists, first of all, in our opinion, in the fact that for the first time an agreement has been reached for the effective reduction of total American and Soviet strategic nuclear armaments, a reduction of the number of both nuclear warheads and their strategic means of delivery to a substantially lower level of 30-50 per cent.

This agreement is, however, important not only for the substantial reductions in the nuclear capabilities of the two major nuclear Powers, but also for the increased stability that comes out of it. At the same time, the solutions agreed on a number of negotiating issues can be looked upon as a starting-point for new agreements whch will be of particular significance, taking into account the large amounts of armaments which still exist in the nuclear stockpiles.

Romania welcomes the intention of the United States of America and the USSR to carry on this process that has just begun in order to undertake new negotiations in the direction of further strengthening strategic stability, inter alia, in outer space. It hopes that such efforts will lead to the conclusion of new substantive agreements which uphold the structural changes and positive evolutions of our time. This, of course, will also be of great help for our negotiations in the Conference.

Mr. President, this is the last meeting under your presidency. I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to express my appreciation for the way in which you have conducted our deliberations. For me as a newcomer in this important negotiating body, your skill and professionalism were of particular interest.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Romania for his statement, for his praise of the START Treaty and for his kind words addressed to me. I now give the floor to the representative of Morocco, Ambassador Benhima.

Mr. BENHIMA (Morocco) (translated from French): Mr. President, your presidency of the Conference on Disarmament is drawing to a close, a presidency which you have assumed with the skill of a veteran diplomat and the wisdom of a man imbued with eminent human qualities. I congratulate you on behalf of my delegation.

Recently, Ambassador Chadha took leave of the Conference. A few moments ago, it was the turn of Ambassador Elaraby, whose appointment to head the Egyptian mission in New York is the consummation of his strenuous work in Geneva. In a few days, Ambassador Ricupero, whose extensive learning and

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perspicacity we appreciate very much, will leave us for Washington. To our three distinguished colleagues we express our wishes for happiness and success in their new duties, and to Ambassador Brotodiningrat we extend a welcome to Geneva.

Disarmament has become a universal concern since the international community became acutely aware of it. Hence any measure, regardless of its scope, becomes significant because it forms part of the process of general and complete disarmament. In that context, it is incontrovertible that the initiation of nuclear disarmament constitutes both an important milestone for the establishment of a climate of trust among States and a decisive factor to strengthen peace and security in the world. One need only recall the fears aroused by the arms race in the very recent past and by the apocalyptic consequences of a nuclear war to grasp the historic scope of the START Treaty signed on 31 July in Moscow, an event that we welcome. Consummating 10 years of laborious and often difficult negotiations, the Treaty provides for a 30 per cent reduction in the strategic nuclear arsenals of the United States of America and the Soviet Union and opens the door to a dynamic process that should in what we hope will be the near future, cover the thousands of nuclear warheads and ballistic missiles not covered by the Moscow Agreement. This agreement is clearly the point of departure for smoother bilateral negotiations, the final aim of which would be the progressive and substantial dismantling of all nuclear arsenals. We hope that all the nuclear Powers will find in this dynamic process adequate grounds for reassurance concerning their own security, thereby facilitating their involvement in a broader process of reducing their nuclear potential.

The arms race in outer space remains a major source of concern for the international community. If we are not careful the growing trend towards its militarization would present serious threats to international détente, which is now being consolidated, and would ruin progress achieved in other areas. Everything possible must therefore be done to preserve this common heritage of all of mankind and to devote all mankind's energies to ensuring access to the peaceful uses of outer space. To realize this ambition and achieve the goal related to all issues connected with nuclear disarmament, it is imperative for the Conference to go beyond the stage of general debates and discussions and initiate substantive work on all issues without further delay. The demand for negotiations dealing with these fundamental issues is repeated at each session. As the sole multilateral negotiating forum in this field, the Conference has vested in it a responsibility that it cannot shirk or mask, and has a mandate that it must fulfil.

Among the vital issues on the agenda is a comprehensive nuclear test ban. The conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty has been urged by the United Nations General Assembly, because it will lead inevitably to the prevention of both horizontal and vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons. Guided by this conviction, my delegation welcomed the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee last year, even though its mandate remains very limited. Guided also by the conviction that the complete prohibition of nuclear tests is an indispensable step along the path to nuclear disarmament, my delegation welcomes with interest the new draft treaty tabled by Sweden. We are

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convinced that it will enrich deliberations on this issue, in particular through its provisions related to verification procedures and those concerning the organization. It is clear that the negotiation of such a draft treaty can take place within the Conference only if the Ad Hoc Committee has a mandate authorizing it to engage in this work. Our determination to consider this draft jointly could be demonstrated by giving the Committee a mandate to discuss it in a useful and constructive fashion.

The delegation of the Kingdom of Morocco concurs with the other members of the Conference in their wish to see the convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons finalized within the planned time-frame. The conclusion of such a convention, in our opinion, is a very important disarmament measure. The substantial progress achieved has warranted our hope that the finalization of a text acceptable to all is near at hand. We do not, however, overlook the serious difficulties which remain.

Unanimous regret has been expressed in the Conference at the considerable time that has been devoted to procedural and organizational matters. Hence the need for our forum to make a resolute commitment to defining ways and means of improving the functioning of the Conference and endowing it with the necessary requisites for improved effectiveness. Several proposals have been presented to that end. My delegation hopes that, once they have been examined, satisfactory solutions will emerge under the dynamic impetus provided by Ambassador Kamal.

The Conference on Disarmament is pursuing its task at a time when the current far-reaching changes are outlining the contours of the world of tomorrow and defining the major orientations of man's destiny. The welcome trend in international relations that has emerged in the wake of the cold war offers greater opportunities to the Conference on Disarmament, which should spare no effort to attain the objectives it has been set. Despite our differences of perception as to certain aspects of our work, we should demonstrate our will to overcome the present difficulties in order to build a future of peace and security for future generations.

In conclusion, allow me to refer to an idea expressed recently by His Majesty the King of Morocco in a statement on the Middle East problem: "If disarmament is a logical consequence of peace, it is equally an indispensable precondition for long-lasting peaceful relations among peoples and States". Hence, Mr. President, we continue to believe that our quest for disarmament is a matter of necessity and not just of virtue.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Morocco for his statement and for the kind words addressed to me. That concludes my list of speakers for today. May I ask whether any other representative wishes to take the floor at this point? I see none. Then we will turn to other business.

You will recall that, in the programme of work for this annual session, we had agreed to hold two weekly plenary meetings during the period 12-23 August. After consultations with the coordinators, consensus has been reached in cancelling the two plenary meetings that had been scheduled for

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Tuesday 13 and Tuesday 20 August. That agreement has been reached as no speakers were inscribed for those two meetings and it seemed advisable therefore to make the resources allocated for those meetings available for other purposes. It is understood that, as has been the practice up to now, one weekly plenary meeting would be held during those two weeks, namely on the two Thursdays, 15 and 22 August. I suggest now that we adopt formally the decision to cancel those two Tuesday meetings.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: Next, the secretariat has circulated today the timetable of meetings to be held by the Conference and its subsidiary bodies during the coming week. As usual, the timetable is indicative and may be subject to change, if needed. On this understanding, I propose that we adopt the timetable.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: In connection with the timetable for the current week, I am requested by the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Effective International Arrangements to Assure Non-nuclear-weapon States against the Use or Threat of Use of Nuclear Weapons to announce that the Ad Hoc Committee will hold another meeting tomorrow, Friday, at 3 p.m., in this conference room.

I have no other business for today, and shall now proceed to make my closing statement at the end of the presidency of the United States of America.

At the beginning of my presidency, I was informed how lucky I was since most of the hard work of setting things up and getting them going had already been done by my capable predecessors, and it would fall to my successor to wind up the CD's work for the year. Well, that proved to be the case; there were few procedural accomplishments these past four weeks. Happily, the trade-off seems to have been that we have moved forward in some important substantive areas in the chemical weapons talks, bringing us closer to the target of a convention by next year.

I also take note of progress made in the second meeting this year of the Group of Scientific Experts and the completion of the GSETT-II experiment; the acceptance of Malta as the thirty-seventh CD non-member participant this year; and also the work done by Ambassador Kamal's open-ended consultations on improved and effective functioning. It is my hope that in addition, our discussions on report-writing will encourage those responsible to minimize the time devoted to it so as to allow us to spend more time working on substantive CW issues. In this connection, I welcome the decision confirmed here today to reduce the plenary meetings scheduled for the next two weeks to one per week.

As I mentioned at the beginning of my presidency, I asked Ambassador Kamal to assist me in private, informal consultations concerning the possibilities for expansion of the CD's membership. All of you are aware that he has pursued this task energetically and with tact. After extensive consultations, however, we compared results and reluctantly concluded that agreement on an

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expansion plan acceptable to all is still elusive. Moreover, we found an increasing number of delegations who feel the expansion issue might better be left for a later time because they fear the politicization of the CD expansion question while we are making a major effort to achieve a CW convention.

The signing of the START Treaty in Moscow last week is a major arms control event which contributes significantly to strategic stability and security in the world. I would hope we can draw inspiration from this signal accomplishment to reinvigorate our own efforts in the CD to complete a chemical weapons convention by next year, a goal we set for ourselves in the revised mandate we recently approved for the CW Ad Hoc Committee.

Many issues remain, but we cannot for a moment slacken our efforts to resolve them if we are to achieve a CW convention in the time that is left to us. Specifically, we must make the maximum possible use of the inter-sessional time between our formal CD meetings, as our CW Ad Hoc Committee Chairman, Ambassador Batsanov, seeks to do. Our Governments and peoples will expect us to produce results in the time-frame we announced. The credibility and even the future of our Conference could be at stake. I therefore urge that we capitalize on the momentum we have recently created for ourselves, reinforced by the historic moment created by signature of the START Treaty, to finish the negotiations on the single most important multilateral arms control treaty in many years. Its time has come.

As I now pass on my responsibilities to Ambassador Arteaga, he has my earnest best wishes and full support for continuing the forward momentum of our work. He brings great skill and experience to the task, and we all wish him well as he assumes the CD presidency for the next five months, not four weeks but five months.

Ambassadors Komatina and Berasategui and their skilled secretariat have my full appreciation. Without their diligent efforts, the work associated with the presidency would have been difficult. I would also like to thank the group coordinators who made up the CD President's bureau.

This concludes my closing statement. I have no other business for this plenary meeting and would now proceed to adjourn it. The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Thursday, 15 August at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.